



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

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MAY 0 5 1999

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



243294

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

**MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: **ACTION MEMORANDUM** - Request for an Emergency Removal Action at  
Gramm Trailer Site, Harvey, Cook County, Illinois,  
(Site ID #B5B5)

FROM: Fredrick A. Micke, On-Scene Coordinator  
Emergency Response Section III

TO: Wendy Carney, Chief  
Emergency Response Branch

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Action Memorandum is to request and document approval to expend up to \$25,000 to abate a threat to public health and the environment posed by an abandoned semi-trailer left on a street in Harvey, Cook County, Illinois (hereinafter called the Gramm Trailer Site). This memorandum also confirms and documents the verbal authorization of \$25,000, which the Acting Chief of the Emergency Response Branch approved on February 3, 1999, for this response action. This emergency response action involved relocating all drums, and other containers (80 in total) from the abandoned trailer and securing them on property owned by the City of Harvey so that hazard characterization could be safely performed.

This activity was necessary because the semi-trailer was in a busy commercial area of the city which made Site security very difficult. Some containers were not labeled; some indicated that the drum contained petroleum product; while some, labeled flammable, did not have Material Safety Data Sheets available for U.S. EPA use. More importantly, the trailer was in very poor condition and therefore, could not be properly secured. It also did not have license plates or DOT shipping placards. On March 12, 1999 all the drums were transported to Environmental Services of America in South Bend, Indiana for disposal.

The emergency response action eliminated the threat of a potential release because the semi-trailer was abandoned without placards and locks, on a street in an active commercial and residential area. An inventory of the semi-trailer is as follows: 79 containers and one welding cylinder. This response action was performed under Section 104 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

This site is not on the National Priorities List.

## **II. SITE CONDITIONS AND BACKGROUND**

CERCLIS ID # ILSFN0507810

### **A. Site Description**

#### **1. Background**

On February 3, 1999, the Harvey Fire Department requested U.S. EPA's assistance in mitigating an abandoned semi-trailer in Harvey, Illinois. U.S. EPA and the Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) went to Harvey and found an abandoned 35-foot trailer filled floor to ceiling with containers (mostly 55-gallon drums), tires and tire rims.

#### **2. Physical location**

The abandoned trailer was found on the north side of 148th Place and Dixie Highway, Harvey, Cook County, Illinois. Geographical coordinates for this location are latitude 41° 37' 12"N and longitude 87° 40' 21"W. The trailer was in very poor condition, with the sides of the trailer severely rusted-out, which made securing the trailer very difficult. Upon consulting with the Harvey Fire Department and the Mayor of Harvey, it was decided to move the trailer to property owned by the City of Harvey (400 East Sibley Boulevard, Harvey, IL) so that the trailer and its contents could be secured and the trailer monitored by City Police. The trailer was "strapped" before it was moved because of its poor condition. The trailer was moved at approximately 5:00pm and secured.

#### **3. Site characteristics**

As mentioned earlier, this site was originally on a local street in a busy commercial area of Harvey. According to the attached environmental justice analysis (Attachment III), residents closest to the site reside in census tract 82690. The percentages in the State of Illinois for both low income and minority are 54% and 50%, respectively, and exceeding one of these values by two times would cause the site to be a high priority environmental justice community. The site, therefore, is considered a medium priority community because the minority percentages are greater than the Illinois Statewide percentages of 50% minority.

#### **4. Release or threatened release into the environment of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant**

On February 3, 1999 the Harvey Fire Department called to notify U.S. EPA of the abandoned trailer and requested that U.S. EPA respond to the scene since drums were visible through the side of the trailer.

As discussed in greater detail later, U.S. EPA determined that the rusty condition of the trailer, the unclear nature of the chemicals in the drums, and the close proximity of the trailer to a commercial district constituted a threat of release into the environment of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. This determination was supported when U.S. EPA determined that many of the drums did contain RCRA hazardous wastes which were characteristic for reactivity or ignitability. Specifically, these drums contained waste oils, solvents, and antifreeze in undetermined quantities.

## **5. NPL status**

This site is neither on nor proposed for listing on the National Priorities List.

## **B. Other Actions to Date**

### **1. Previous actions**

Before, U.S. EPA and START arrived, the Harvey Fire Department opened the locked trailer and restricted access near the trailer. This action expedited the response, because it allowed U.S. EPA and START to assess the situation without entering the trailer and facilitated the quick removal of the trailer to a secure area.

### **2. Current actions**

There are no further actions planned regarding this site.

## **III. THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH OR WELFARE OR THE ENVIRONMENT, AND STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES**

The conditions observed at the Gramm Trailer posed a threat to public health and the environment and met the criteria for a removal action as stated in the National Contingency Plan (NCP), 40 CFR § 300.415 (b)(2), specifically:

### **A) Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals, or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants;**

Materials exhibiting RCRA hazardous waste characteristics of ignitability and/or reactivity have been identified in drums and other containers in the trailer. An ignitable waste is any liquid which exhibits a flash point of less than 140°F. The characteristic of reactivity is when the waste has **any** of the following properties: (1) It is normally unstable and readily undergoes violent change without detonating. (2) It reacts violently with water. (3) It forms potentially explosive mixtures with water. (4) When mixed with water, it generates toxic gases, vapors or fumes in quantity sufficient to present a danger to human health or the environment. (5) It is a cyanide or

sulfide bearing waste which, when exposed to pH conditions between 2 and 12.5 can generate toxic gases, vapors or fumes in a quantity sufficient to present a danger to human health and the environment. (6) It is capable of detonation or explosive decomposition or reaction at standard temperature and pressure. (7) It is a forbidden explosive as defined in 49 CFR 173.51, or a Class A explosive as defined in 49 CFR 173.53 or a Class B explosive as defined in 49 CFR 173.88.

The trailer containing these materials was left unsecured in a busy commercial and residential area. The contents could present an immediate threat to residents and workers in the area. In addition, the real threat of vandalism to the trailer and its contents existed.

**B) Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers that may pose a threat of release;**

The emergency response contractor, START, and the OSC removed the drums from the trailer on February 4. The back half of the trailer contained seventy-nine (79) containers and one welding cylinder; and the front half of the trailer containing tires and tire rims. The 79 containers were mainly 55-gallon drums with many of them found to be empty. The containers were staged and secured in one of the buildings at 400 East Sibley Boulevard. The City of Harvey agreed to take responsibility for the trailer and the tires.

Samples were collected from the containers. Most of the nonempty drums contained waste oil product; with the remaining drums containing solvents and antifreeze (ethylene glycol). Hazardous characterization of samples and the shipping of samples for analysis was conducted on February 5. The characterization of the samples resulted in two waste streams; flammable liquids and flammable solids. In addition, a roll-off box was brought on-site to collect all of the empty crushed drums.

The roll-off box was picked up on February 12. After the lab analyses were completed, and disposal proposals received and reviewed, twenty (20) drums were prepared for shipping on March 11. Some of the drums were in poor condition and, therefore, it was necessary to consolidate some of the contents and overpack some of the drums prior to shipment. The drums were shipped and disposed of on March 12. The welding cylinder was disposed of on March 15.

**C) Threat of fire or explosion;**

The threat of fire and explosion was present at this Site because these wastes could be classified as RCRA ignitable and/or reactive hazardous substances.

**D) The unavailability of other appropriate Federal or State response mechanism to respond to the release;**

On February 3, 1999, Fire Chief of the Harvey Fire Department called to notify U.S. EPA of the abandoned trailer and requested U.S. EPA's assistance. The Harvey Fire Department did not

have the requisite expertise to deal with these hazardous substances.

#### **IV. ENDANGERMENT DETERMINATION**

Given the site conditions, the nature of hazardous substances on-site, and the potential exposure pathways described in Sections II and III above, actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances from this Site, if not addressed by implementing the response action selected in this Action Memorandum, may have resulted in an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, or welfare, or the environment.

#### **V. PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ESTIMATED COSTS**

The response actions described in this Action Memorandum directly addressed potential releases of ignitable and reactive waste which posed a threat to public health and the environment.

Emergency response activities at the site included: developing a health and safety plan, relocating the contents of the trailer, sampling the contents of the trailer, and arranging for disposal of the contents.

Emergency response activities under this Action Memorandum required approximately 4 on-site working days. The threats posed by identified hazardous waste materials met the criteria listed in 40 CFR § 300.415(b)(2) of the NCP and were consistent with the removal action performed. Furthermore, no post-removal controls were necessary.

The response actions described in this memorandum directly addressed actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants at the Site which posed an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health and safety and the environment. These response actions did not impose a burden on the affected property disproportionate to the extent to which that property contributed to the conditions being addressed.

The detailed cleanup contractor costs are presented in Attachment 1 and estimated project costs are summarized below:

#### **REMOVAL PROJECT CEILING ESTIMATE**

##### **EXTRAMURAL COSTS:**

Cleanup Contractor Costs	\$ 13,500
Contingency (20%)	2,700
Subtotal	<u>\$ 16,200</u>
Total START, including multiplier	3,000

Extramural Subtotal	\$ 19,200
Extramural Contingency (15%)	\$ 2,880
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TOTAL, EXTRAMURAL COSTS	\$ 22,080

**INTRAMURAL COSTS:**

U.S. EPA Direct Costs  
\$30 x (50 Regional hours plus 4 HQ hours)      \$ 1,620

U.S. EPA Indirect Costs  
(\$65 x 50 Regional hours)      \$ 3,250

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TOTAL, INTRAMURAL COSTS      \$ 4,870

**TOTAL REMOVAL PROJECT CEILING ESTIMATE: \$26,950; use \$27,000**

All applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) will be complied with to the extent practicable.

Emergency response activities performed pursuant to this Action Memorandum were, to the extent practicable considering the exigencies of the situation, consistent with ARARs identified by the Illinois EPA.

**VI. EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SHOULD ACTION BE DELAYED OR NOT TAKEN**

Delayed or non-action could have resulted in the abandoned trailer remaining on the street in the active commercial area. Potential release of the hazardous substances could have occurred as a result of a vehicular accident, a chemical reaction, or a curious trespasser or child entering the trailer..

**VII. OUTSTANDING POLICY ISSUES**

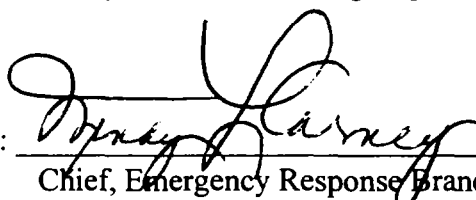
None.

### **VIII. ENFORCEMENT**

For administrative purposes, information concerning the enforcement strategy for this Site is contained in an Enforcement Confidential Addendum.

### **IX. RECOMMENDATION**

This decision document represents the selected removal action for the Gramm Trailer Site, Harvey, Cook County, Illinois, developed in accordance with CERCLA as amended, and is not inconsistent with the NCP. This decision is based on the Administrative Record for the site. Conditions at the site meet the NCP, 40 CFR § 300.415 (b) (2) criteria for a removal and I recommend your approval of this emergency removal action. The total project ceiling, if approved, will be \$27,000. Of this, an estimated \$13,500 may be used for cleanup contractor costs. You may indicate your decision by signing below.

APPROVAL:  DATE: 5/5/99  
Chief, Emergency Response Branch

DISAPPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Emergency Response Branch

Confidential Enforcement Addendum

#### Attachments

- I. Cleanup Contractor Cost Estimate
- II. Index of the Administrative Record
- III. Environmental Justice Analysis

cc: Kevin Mould, U.S. EPA HQ, 5202G

Mike Chezick, U.S. Department of Interior, w/o Enf. Addendum

Ed Osowski, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, w/o Enf. Addendum

Steve Davis, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, w/o Enf. Addendum

PAGE 8

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NOT RELEVANT TO THE  
SELECTION OF THE  
REMOVAL ACTION

GRAMM TRAILER SITE  
APRIL, 1999

ENFORCEMENT CONFIDENTIAL ADDENDUM

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1 PAGE

NOT RELEVANT TO THE SELECTION OF THE REMOVAL ACTION

**ATTACHMENT I**  
**INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT COST ESTIMATE**  
**GRAMM TRAILER SITE**  
**HARVEY, ILLINOIS**

**APRIL 1999**

The estimated cleanup contractor costs are as follows:

Personnel	\$ 6,000
Equipment	1,500
Subcontractors	6,000
 Total	 \$13,500

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ATTACHMENT II

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REMOVAL ACTION

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD  
FOR  
GRAMM TRAILER SITE  
HARVEY, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ORIGINAL  
APRIL 15, 1999

<u>NO.</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>RECIPIENT</u>	<u>TITLE/DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
1	02/03/99	Maritote, J. & F. Micke; U.S. EPA	File	Telephone Report re: Abandoned Semi-Trailer with Unmarked Barrels at 148th Place & Dixie Highway, Harvey, IL	1
2	00/00/00	Micke, F., U.S. EPA	Muno, W., U.S. EPA	Action Memorandum: Request for an Emergency Removal Action at the Gramm Trailer Site (PENDING)	

**ATTACHMENT III**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

# Region 5 Superfund EJ Analysis

## Gramm Trailer Site Harvey, Illinois

